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P 211048Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2698
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5115
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2865
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2730
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3359
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000513

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN AND INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: TAKING ON THE DRUG SUPPLIERS

REF: Ashgabat 184

11. (U) Another drug-related crime story was reported in the April 17th edition of Ashgabat weekly "Adalat" (Justice) newspaper: According to Adalat, a 40-year old resident of Serdar (Balkan Province) identified as Yazgeldi Ayimov, had previously been convicted and imprisoned on drug charges, but then released under a general presidential pardon. He allegedly purchased 24.3 grams of heroin from an unidentified person at the Serdar train station last November and was then detained by officers of the State Counter Narcotics Service (SCNS) when he attempted to re-sell the heroin in his neighborhood. Ayimov was sentenced to 13 years in prison.

12. (SBU) COMMENT: In Turkmenistan, the vast majority of pardoned drug traffickers and criminals are believed to head right back into the drug business after they are released. Most of those in prison are reportedly repeat offenders, serving a second, third, or fourth sentence.

13. (SBU) COMMENT CONTINUED: Sources report that in the past, relatives of those convicted on drug charges were able to pay bribes to police officials, prosecutors, judges, even those compiling the presidential pardon lists in order to secure their release. Since the establishment of the SCNS, however, the same sources say that it has become almost impossible to bribe officials into dropping the charges. President Berdimuhamedov reportedly has also stopped including drug dealers in his regular large-scale presidential pardon lists, all part of a governmental effort to go after drug suppliers. Nevertheless, to take on the country's drug problem with any real success, the government needs to face the factors that contribute to the problem head-on, including unemployment, the alarming lack of educational opportunities and an absence of effective drug treatment programs. END COMMENT.

MILES